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Joe McMoneagle is a former intelligence officer in the U.S. Army.

Nelson man used psychic techniques for government

By Jessie Martin
Staff writer

Joe McMoneagle, a Nelson County resident who worked for 17 years as a spy for the government, said controversial psychic techniques are "just a tool" to gather information.

McMoneagle said he worked "for most major intelligence agencies in Washington ... the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the FBI, the Secret Service, the Department of Defense and the Drug Enforcement Agency."

One of the most high-profile cases McMoneagle said he worked on was the 1979 Iran Hostage Crisis.

"I did a number of remote viewings ... more than 40 on that alone. An example would be, if you want to know something about a hostage in Iran, I would go into an office, much like a regular office, sit at a table with a blank piece of paper and a pen or pencil, they would show you a photograph of the individual and I would then draw or sketch something."

McMoneagle said he would be able to focus, leave his body and get a sense about the subject he was asked about.

It was not until the early 1970s, said his wife Nancy, that McMoneagle began having "spontaneous outer-body experiences" and began working on remote viewings.

Although McMoneagle worked on more than 350 cases as a U.S. Army intelligence officer, he said he could not discuss his involvement because the cases are still "extremely sensitive."

A native of Miami, McMoneagle volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army in 1964, when "It wasn't a popular thing to do."

When he returned from Vietnam, he spent a week at the Afton Mountain Inn.

"It's like the Switzerland of the Northeast," he said. "I just fell in love with this area, and moved

here permanently when I retired in 1977."

After retiring from the Army, McMoneagle worked as a consultant for SRI International, on the research side of the business, and continues to give lectures at the Monroe Institute, a paranormal research center in Nelson County.

One of the more interesting aspects of the business, said McMoneagle, 49, was the skepticism many people have toward psychic phenomena.

"I'm proud to say most people were skeptical," he said. "Usually, when we were allowed to demonstrate, we could prove (the skeptics) wrong ... But sometimes, people were incapable of opening their minds."

The "remote viewings," said McMoneagle, are very different than psychic readings.

"Psychics have no rules guiding them, they want to know everything, touch everything," he said. "It's critically important to make the distinction, a number of psychics are going around claiming they are remote viewers, and that is not correct."

"A lot has been said about trusting psychic information as intelligence information. Remote viewings produce information using techniques, and just like any other collection techniques, the information needs to be cross-checked, and used to enhance other systems of collection."

"It's just a tool," he said. "But it would be foolish not to use it. It would be foolish to use it as a stand-alone technique."